

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-13

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FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

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INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE

U.S. INT ALGIERS ALGERIA 0003

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT LEBANON

U.S. INT CAIRO EGYPT 0012

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN

AMEMBASSY LONDON ENGLAND

S E C R E T MANAMA 0038

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS : MARR, PFOR, BA

SUBJECT : MAJOR BAHRAIN POLICY DECISIONS AWAIT DEVELOPMENTS
IN ARAB WORLD AS A WHOLE

REF : (A) KUWAIT 0294 (NOTAL); (B) JIDDA 432 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN IS ENCOURAGED BY AMERICAN PEACE
EFFORTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST BUT CONTINUES TO POSTPONE CONCRETE
POLICY DECISIONS AFFECTING U.S.-BAHRAIN RELATIONS UNTIL
PROSPECTS FOR AN OVERALL ARAB-ISRAEL SETTLEMENT BECOME CLEARER.
END SUMMARY.

1) ACCOMPANIED BY ECON-COMMERCIAL OFFICER STARRETT, I PAID
COURTESY CALL ON BAHRAIN RULER SHAIKH ISA ON JANUARY 28.
PRIME MINISTER SHAIKH KHALIFA AND FOREIGN MINISTER SHAIKH
MOHAMMAD WERE ALSO PRESENT. AFTER EXCHANGE OF PLEASANTRIES,

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ISA AND MINISTERS AGREED TO MY SUGGESTION THAT WE MIGHT DISCUSS

LATEST MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS. MY RECENT DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON HAD LEFT ME OPTIMISTIC THAT PEACE COULD BE ACHIEVED IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

2) ISA SAID HE HAD BEEN DOWNCAST DURING THE EXTENDED NEGOTIATIONS TO ACHIEVE A DISENGAGEMENT OF ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN FORCES. BUT SINCE THIS HAD BEEN ACCOMPLISHED, AND PARTICULARLY SINCE THE LATEST VISIT OF PRESIDENT SADAT TO BAHRAIN, HE HIMSELF HAD COME TO BELIEVE THAT A MIDDLE EAST PEACE WAS PROBABLE. HOWEVER, HE HAD BEEN CONCERNED BY SADAT'S ACCOUNTS OF HIS DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SOVIETS WHOM ISA DISTRUSTS, AND HE WAS WORRIED BY THE IMPLICATIONS OF EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FAHMI'S LATEST TRIP TO MOSCOW.

3) FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMAD REVEALED THAT HE TALKED FOR HALF AN HOUR THE PREVIOUS DAY AT BAHRAIN AIRPORT WITH PRESIDENT SADAT'S AIDE ASHRAF MARWAN WHO HAD DESCRIBED HIS MISSION AS SEEKING GENERAL ARAB AGREEMENT TO LIFT THE ARAB OIL BOYCOTT AGAINST THE UNITED STATES. MARWAN SAID JIDDA FAVORED AN IMMEDIATE LIFTING OF THE BOYCOTT (JIDDA 432), BUT KUWAIT WAS OPPOSED ON GROUNDS THAT TO STOP THE BOYCOTT BEFORE DISENGAGEMENT WAS ACHIEVED ON THE GOLAN HEIGHTS WOULD AMOUNT TO ABANDONING SYRIA. MARWAN TOLD MOHAMMAD THAT AS A MEASURE OF EGYPTIAN CONFIDENCE IN AMERICAN PEACE EFFORTS, EGYPT AND ALGERIA WOULD ESTABLISH FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES ABOUT FEBRUARY 20.

4) PRIME MINISTER KHALIFA WENT TO CONSIDERABLE LENGTH TO STRESS THAT CURRENT DIFFICULTIES IN U.S.-SAUDI RELATIONS, SHOULD NOT CAUSE THE UNITED STATES TO LET KING FAISAL DOWN. FAISAL HAD BEEN OUR OLDEST AND BEST ARAB FRIEND AND COULD BE IN THE FUTURE.

5) IN CONCLUSION I NOTED THAT THE GENERAL CONVERSATION WE HAD CARRIED ON HAD OBVIOUS AND CONCRETE IMPLICATIONS FOR BAHRAIN-U.S. RELATIONS. TIME WAS A FACTOR BEARING ON OUR RELATIONS, AS THE GOVERNMENT OF BAHRAIN KNEW, AND I WOULD BE LOOKING FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO DISCUSS OUR MUTUAL PROBLEMS. SHAIKH MOHAMMAD RATHER HASTILY SUGGESTED WE DO SO ON ANOTHER OCCASION. GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES WERE VERY SECRET

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IMPORTANT TO BAHRAIN, AND THE GOB WOULD WELCOME CLOSE AND FREQUENT CONSULTATIONS. THE ARAB PETROLEUM MINISTERS WOULD BE MEETING ON FEBRUARY 14 TO DISCUSS THE OIL BOYCOTT. BAHRAIN WOULD BE WATCHING THIS AND OTHER MIDDLE EAST DEVELOPMENTS WITH THE KEENEST INTEREST.

COMMENT:

THIS FIRST MEETING WITH TOP GOB LEADERS CONFIRMED ESSENTIALLY

WHAT WE ALREADY KNEW, NAMELY, THAT A HIGH VALUE IS PLACED
ON U.S.-BAHRAIN RELATIONS AND THAT THE GOB WILL DO WHAT IT
REASONABLY CAN, EXTERNAL DEVELOPMENTS PERMITTING, TO PRESERVE
WHAT ALREADY EXISTS. IT IS CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT THE
ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN DISENGAGEMENT, STANDING BY ITSELF, WAS NOT
REPEAT NOT SIGNIFICANT ENOUGH, IN BAHRAIN EYES, TO PERMIT RESCISSION
AT THIS TIME OF THE MIDEASTFOR TERMINATION NOTICE. WE CAN
HOPE THAT AREA DEVELOPMENTS IN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS WILL EASE
THE WAY FOR OUR BAHRAINI FRIENDS TO QUIETLY LET US KNOW THAT
WE CAN CONTINUE OUR NAVAL PRESENCE HERE. THIS, OF COURSE,
WILL ALSO ASSURE CONTINUATION OF OUR IMPORTANT BAHRAIN SCHOOL.

KILLGORE

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